

*To Bambergas, in the City of St. Paul*  
A 13  
**WEDDING SERMON:**

BEING THE  
SUBSTANCE 13

OF A

**DISCOURSE**

DELIVERED AT

GLASS-HOUSE YARD,

On MAY 14, 1775.

PREACHED BY PARTICULAR DESIRE:  
AND NOW PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE BRIDE-  
GROOM, AND OF OTHERS WHO HEARD IT.

To which is added,

**AN ADDRESS,**  
(BY WAY OF CAUTION AND ADVICE)  
**TO YOUNG PERSONS.**

---

BY R. ELLIOT, A. B.

And formerly of Bennet-College, Cambridge.

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—Take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously  
against the wife of his youth, Mal. ii. 15.

Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that  
feareth the LORD she shall be praised, Prov. xxxi. 30.

**THE SECOND EDITION,**

CORRECTED AND ENLARGED.

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MDCCLXXVIII.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

WINDS OF STORM

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P R E F A C E

TO THE

R E A D E R.

THE following discourse was preached at the request of Mr. EDWARD SCALES, Jeweller in the *Strand*, on the occasion of his marriage with Miss HOME of *Snow-hill*, LONDON.----They were married on the 11th of May, 1775, and the sermon was preached on the Lord's day following.---Without the minister's knowledge, it was taken in *short-hand*, with a view to its future publication: the Gentleman, therefore, who took it down, was requested to transcribe it; but being at that time very much engaged with his own private affairs, several months elapsed, before he could find convenient opportunity for it: which is the reason why it was not published sooner. The discourse indeed hath undergone a considerable alteration, though not with respect to sentiment or doctrine. And, in order to make it the more useful, I have not only added to it in several places, but have also much enlarged the exhortation and address to young persons, at the close

of it.---I have prayed and labored to make it useful to all---If the doctrine be scriptural and rational, the language plain and familiar, and the expressions decent and proper; I hope a divine blessing will attend the perusal of it: and then I shall little regard any censure which some sort of *critics* may think proper to pass upon it. ---I wish indeed, and hope that persons of superior abilities, may hereby be excited to treat the subject with greater propriety and elegance, according to its true merit and importance; for no man is approved or commended of the Lord, according to the greatness or number of talents, which he *possesses*, and which God *hath given him*; but according to the use, and improvement which he makes of them.---Truth and edification are the things which I chiefly aim at; and whatsoever tends to manifest the former, and promote the latter, no wise and good man will either despise or condemn; although the attempt may be attended with much weakness, and imperfection. And, in my humble opinion, that stile, and those writings which are plain and easy to be understood; are most likely to be extensively useful, and of general benefit to mankind; be-  
cause



# P R E F A C E.

cause they are suited, and adapted to the capacities of the unlearned, and the common people ; who are, by far, the greatest part of all nations, towns, and places of the habitable world. And for this cause also, that which is counted *prolix*, and needless *repetition* by others, is not so by them ; but rather to many of them, who are, as *children in understanding*, it is both necessary and profitable : for to such persons, “ Precept must be upon precept, and line upon line, here a little and there a little.” Should it be thought, therefore, by the more discerning and judicious, that in some parts of the discourse, I have, as it were, *over-worded* it, or been diffusely tedious ; by repeating again and again the very same things ; yet, as I have done it merely for the sake of instructing the ignorant, and with a view to the profit of those who are dull of apprehension, and forgetful hearers ; may I not hope, from the *truly wise and learned*, to meet with that candor and indulgence which is so peculiar to men of their character : especially, as the apostles themselves, seem to have thought, that *such sort of repetitions*, were neither unnecessary, nor unprofitable ; see Phil. iii. 1,---2. Pet. 1. 12, 13.---Should

any of my readers suppose me, in some points, to be mistaken, which perhaps may be the case, yet as I am not conscious of aiming at any thing but truth, and peace; whatever, by way of objection, may be urged against me, either from the divine word, just reasoning, or matter of fact; I hope I shall always have an ear to hear; and never despise, nor reject it.

PERHAPS, the very novelty of the subject may offend some weak and superstitious persons, who can relish nothing but what comes recommended by custom or tradition: for though *funeral discourses* are common from most pulpits, a *Wedding Sermon* is very rarely heard of; and yet the subject, perhaps, is fully as copious, and to those whom it concerns, equally interesting and important: And were it often treated by able, and judicious ministers, it might prove a means of preventing many rash, and unhappy marriages; and consequently of much mischief, and sorrow in the world: for, I think, it cannot be denied, that the behavior and conduct of married persons one towards the other, hath a considerable influence, not on their own peace and happiness only; but also on the peace and happiness

pinefs both of their fervants, and children, and friends ; and of fociety in general.---- That the duties incumbent on both parties are, by many, fo little regarded, and greatly neglected ; is, owing perhaps, in a great meafure, to their being, either ignorant, or forgetful of their *folemn vows* ; and that becaufe, they are not properly instructed in the nature of thofe duties, or are feldom reminded of them \*. And is it not ftrange that minifters, who fpeak of almoft every other divine fubject, fhould fo generally neglect this, when the apoftles, both Peter and Paul, have written fo largely of it ? “ For all fcripture is given by infpiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteoufnefs ; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

R. E.

\* To fupply this defect ; may I be permitted to recommend, to married perfons, the ferial and *annual* perufal of the following difcourfe, (until they meet with a better) : and what time fo proper for it as on their WEDDING-DAY. For, by this means, being often reminded of their mutual obligations, both parties may be led to fee wherein they had offended, and be excited alfo for the time to come, to be more careful, and diligent, in the exact performance of their duty one towards the other.

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## WEDDING SERMON.

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EPHESIANS V. 31, 32, 33.

- “ For this cause shall a man leave his father  
“ and mother, and shall be joined unto his  
“ wife, and they two shall be one flesh.  
“ This is a great mystery ; but I speak concern-  
“ ing Christ and the Church.  
“ Nevertheless let every one of you in particu-  
“ lar so love his wife, even as himself ; and  
“ the wife see that she reverence her husband.”

**I**F we look a little back into this chapter, we shall plainly see the origin, and ground of all the directions, exhortations, and commandments, which the apostle hath here given unto married persons ; for they are evidently founded in, and built upon, that *fear of God*, which he had mentioned in ver. 21. “ Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.” The

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word



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word *υποτασσομενοι* here rendered *submitting*, denotes an *orderly* subjection of the less to the greater, in that particular station, rank and order, wherein God hath wisely placed us, according to his own will.---God is not the author of confusion and strife, but of order and peace; and that in all his ways, and in all his works; whether they respect angels or men; things earthly, or things heavenly; both in the kingdom of nature, and the kingdom of grace. Now the divine œconomy and subordination in the Church of Christ, which the apostle treats of in the passage before us, is a beautiful arrangement, or disposition, and fixing of persons in their proper place and order; both for the honor and glory of God, who is the author of it; and also for the benefit and edification of the whole body of believers, who are the subjects of it. Every member therefore who is not contented with his appointed station, or refuses to abide in it, and neglects the duties belonging to it, presumptuously breaks the order of heaven, rebels against the authority of God, introduces confusion into the Church of Christ, and is an injurious member of it. For the strength, beauty, and edification of the whole body, principally consists in all the members being fitly placed and joined together; and in an orderly and willing subjection of the less

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to the greater throughout all the members of it: and as *that subjection* proceeds from humbleness of mind, and meekness of spirit; so *this humility and meekness*; is founded in, and springs from, the true knowledge and fear of God; whereby every sincere christian is both awed, and kept from breaking the divine order; and enabled also through grace, to keep his appointed station, and fulfil the duties of it: and therefore he saith, "Submit yourselves one to another in the fear of God." And from hence also it plainly appears, that the *fear of God* is a divine, and leading principle in all *true religion*; and one of the most powerful motives unto all acceptable obedience. If this therefore be forgotten, or neglected by us; it is not likely that we should understand the true nature, use, or end of those commandments and exhortations which are here given us: consequently, being ignorant of them, we shall not feel their proper force, nor will they have their due weight and authority with us.

UPON the same ground also, viz. that of the *fear of God*, is founded and built all those other charges and exhortations which, in the chapter following, the apostle hath given both to *children* and their *parents*, to *servants* and their

## 4 A WEDDING SERMON.

*masters* : for, as on the one hand, by the fear of the LORD, which is the beginning of wisdom, men depart from evil, and do good ; so, on the other, where this fear is wanting, men depart from good, and do evil : for *that man will abhor no iniquity, who hath not the fear of God before his eyes.* It is God, therefore, even the MOST HIGH GOD, the Creator, Governor, and Judge of the World, who is here speaking to us, by the mouth of his apostle : every charge, exhortation, and commandment, he hath given us, is from God ; the words are his ; in his name and by his authority are they all spoken ; they therefore who obey them not, obey not God ; “ and he that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God ; ” to whom also we must give an account.

Now, if these things be properly attended to, and regarded by us, nothing that is here spoken and commanded, will be accounted hard or grievous to us ; but quite the contrary : for “ the man that feareth the LORD, delighteth greatly in his commandments : ” Psalm cxii. 1.

Of all our natural relations, that which subsists between married persons is the most eminent ; it was *prior* to all other, and therefore

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## A WEDDING SERMON. 5

is the *most ancient* : it is *nearer* than all other, and therefore is the *most excellent* : consequently all our other relations are founded in it, and derived from it. Without this, the relations of father and son, of king and subject, of master and servant, could never have been known, nor subsisted in the world. Therefore the intimate union and relation which subsists between married persons, is, of all other, the most honorable and sacred ; wherein also is contained, as the apostle assures us, “ A GREAT MYSTERY.” Adam’s creation and his after-marriage with Eve his wife, who (as to the flesh) was taken out of him, is a clear and striking figure and resemblance of the mysterious oneness, and marriage - union, between Christ and his Church ; it is not only the first on record, but also the chief emblem of that divine mystery. All the natural types, and emblems which the scripture afterwards mentions ; whether they relate to this, or any other, heavenly mystery, are, as I suppose, little and imperfect, in comparison of *this* and therefore the apostle, in the passage before us, calls it “ A GREAT MYSTERY,” that is to say, it is eminently so above many others : but that FIRST and GREATEST of all MYSTERIES, namely, the union between the FATHER and the SON ; between JEHOVAH and his CHRIST ; which is re-

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vealed and declared to us in many scriptures, particularly in Prov. viii. 22. John vi. 57. x. 30. xiv. 10, 11. 20. xvii. 11. 21, 22, 23, is a pattern or resemblance of it, which is not *natural* and *earthly*, but *supernatural* and *heavenly*.

I proceed now, in the *first place*, to consider and explain the several particulars relating to this mystery; just as they lie in the context before us.---The apostle begins with the weaker vessel; for he first gives directions, and delivers his charge, unto married women, in these words: *Wives submit yourselves to your own husbands as unto the Lord*; the woman is here required to be subject unto her own husband---to her *own*, not to another; for no man hath any power over her but her husband only---*as unto the Lord*, whom the husband represents, and therefore she is required to obey him, in the Lord. Thus "Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord" or master, whereby she acknowledged that God had made him her head, and that he had a divine right to rule over her: see Gen. iii. 16. Let the daughters of Sarah imitate their mother, in the faith, and copy after her, as their pattern and example. But, from hence also, it plainly appears, that the husband's power over his wife is a delegated power;



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power ; not absolute, but limited ; and that it extends no further than to things lawful ; and that this power vested in him is designed and tends only to promote the wife's real honor, peace, and comfort : for it is certain God hath not given him any *unlawful* authority over her, nor hath he made the *husband head of the wife*, for evil, but for good : consequently that obedience which is here required of the wife, is to be understood in a limited and restrained sense, and is to be interpreted of things lawful only. Therefore, in the husband's lawful commands, he hath the LORD's authority for it ; but if he assume a power over his wife which God hath not given him, in that case, the wife is not to be obedient ; for the *Lord Christ* is the head of the husband, as the husband is the head of the wife, and God is the head of all : the wife, therefore, in every instance of obedience unto her husband, is, at the same time, to be obedient unto Christ, and unto God, in him ; but this she could not be, if she obeyed her husband in any thing that is *unlawful*.

BUT if the wife refuse to submit unto her husband, and deny his authority over her, in things that are right and lawful, she then denies the authority of Christ, and refuses to

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submit herself unto him likewise. “For the *husband* is the *head* of the *wife*, even as *Christ* is the *head* of the *Church* :” here the apostle gives us the reason why the wife ought to be subject unto her husband, viz. because *he* is her head ; and if it be asked, how came he to be so ? and who made him so ? The scripture tells us : he was made so by the ordinance of God : he appointed, and he hath commanded it : for unto “the woman he said, Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee :” and therein the headship and dominion of Christ, over the Church, was also typified, and represented. But the words, *even as*, cannot denote a full and *proper equality*, but similitude and likeness only ; for it is certain that Christ is the head of the Church, in a much more perfect and extensive manner than the husband is the head of the wife. And here the apostle takes occasion to declare briefly what Christ, according to the will of God, hath done, and is yet doing, for his bride, the Church,---“He is the Saviour of the body :” by which words the apostle might intend to declare, not only the love of Christ *towards his body*, the Church ; but also the love and duty of husbands towards their wives : for every husband that preserves and provides for his wife’s safety and happiness, in this world, as he ought, may,

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may, in a temporal sense, be considered as the Saviour of her body : and from hence it appears to be highly reasonable and expedient, that as the Church is subject unto Christ, so should the wife be to her own husband ; and that not only as obliged by the authority of a divine command, but also from the generous motives of love and gratitude towards him. And therefore the apostle adds, “ as the Church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands *in every thing*.”---Although the wife’s submission and obedience unto her husband, which God, by his apostle, hath here commanded, be very extensive, full, and perfect ; for it is universal, even *in all things*, and consequently at *all times*, and in *all places* : yet the consideration of having the Church for her pattern, and as going before her, in obedience unto Christ ; this should rather make the married wife ambitious to tread in the Church’s steps, and careful to copy after her glorious example ; than to think the precept harsh, or the injunction severe : much less ought she secretly to fret or repine at it ; and indeed she cannot be subject unto Christ himself, unless she be subject unto her own husband : for the true christian Church is always subject unto Christ her Lord ; and this is one of his commandments, that the wife, for his sake, should be subject unto

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unto her own husband, in every thing : consequently this subjection of the wife to her husband, is, in sense and substance, nothing more than a willing subjection unto God, and to his Christ. And therefore it should always be remembered, that the precept extends only to things lawful and comely, according to the ordinance of God, and the commandments of the Lord Jesus. But if the Church be subject unto Christ in every thing, then it certainly follows, that the hopes and pretensions of those persons are vain and groundless, who endeavour to persuade themselves, or imagine, that they are members of the true Church of Christ, when they are not subject unto him in all things ; or, at least, are not sincerely desirous of it, aiming at it, and following after it : for to such vain pretenders, and loose professors, he saith, “ Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say ? ” Luke vi. 46. But the Church of Christ are a willing people, who, from the heart, both love his name, his government, and his laws. And if you that are married women, constantly keep the eye of your mind upon the pattern which is here given you, viz. that of the Church, as married to Christ, and as obeying him in all things : I hope you will then both see the propriety, and feel the force, of the divine charge and exhortation,

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exhortation.---And now the apostle having delivered his charge unto the wives, and enforced their duty upon them, as christian women, and that by arguments and motives the most rational, convincing, and powerful : as 1. From the commandment and authority of God : 2. The headship and dominion of Christ : 3. The submission and obedience of the Church : 4. From a sense of gratitude and obligation to her own husband. He proceeds, in the next place, to give directions, and deliver his charge unto the husbands likewise:---  
 “Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it.”

THE wife's duty, as we have already heard, consists chiefly in a humble, cheerful, and ready submission unto her own husband, according to the will and ordinance of God : and from these words it appears likewise, that the husband's duty principally consists in a sincere, fervent, and constant love towards his wife. For it is observable, that the apostle doth not say, Husbands, *rule*, govern, *lord it* over your wives ; but “ husbands, *love* your wives.” The husband's right indeed to rule and govern his wife is expressly declared, Gen. 3. and here also it is plainly implied in that he is made the head,  
and



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and the wife is commanded to be subject to him. But first he is commanded to love his wife, and then to rule over her : but love will not suffer him to defraud, oppress, or wrong her, in any instance whatever :—*love worketh no evil*—neither is the husband capable of ruling his wife with justice, prudence, and kindness, as he ought ; unless he love her : and, in my humble opinion, if he love her not, he hath no *divine right* to exercise dominion over her : for God hath not made the husband head of the wife to vex and trouble her ; much less to act the tyrant, and as a cruel lord to rule over her with rigor : But, on the contrary, he hath made him her head, to guide, protect, support, and comfort her in love : for even Christ himself (the husband's pattern) was made head of the Church, because he loved her ; nor would he have been made the Church's head had he not first loved her, and been willing to have given himself for her. The love and submission, therefore, of wives towards their husbands, which God hath enjoined them, is not more hard and difficult to be performed, nor, perhaps, so hard, as the love and duty which husbands owe towards their wives, and which God hath here commanded.

REMARK.

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REMARK. It is generally supposed (and I think with reason and truth) that it is more difficult to rule and govern well, than to submit unto proper government and authority: the man therefore that possesses a right temper and disposition of mind, as a servant, will not envy his master, considered *merely* as a lord and ruler. But if a man know not how to serve and obey well, much less would he be able to rule and govern well: therefore no king or ruler whatever can possibly reign or rule over others, so as to exercise his power aright, without abusing it, unless he himself hath first learnt to serve and obey the great God, who is the King and Ruler of us all: knowledge, experience, and the fear of God, are qualifications absolutely necessary for the right performance of so great a duty.----But to return: As Christ's love to the Church is made the pattern of the husband's love to his wife; let us briefly consider *how*, and in what manner Christ hath loved his Church. And here the apostle plainly tells us, that he "GAVE HIMSELF for her;" i. e. he gave himself to die for her:---for her sake, to do *his Father's will*, and in obedience to his high command, he voluntarily laid aside the glory which he had with the Father before the world was; and descending from heaven to earth, "he was made flesh, and made under the

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the law : "---for her sake also he willingly endured the cross, was made a curse, and bore the wrath of God (the punishment due to her sins) that she might be redeemed from the former and escape the latter : " Though he was rich yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich," 2 Cor.viii. 9. " He suffered (as the scripture further testifies) for sins, *the just for the unjust*, that he might bring us to God ;" and, God also commendeth his love towards us, in that, whilst we were yet sinners, he gave his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to be our Saviour ; who, according to the will of God, laid down his life, and gave himself a sacrifice, for us : and thus we were " reconciled unto God, by the death of his Son," Rom. v. 10. And not only so ; but as " the Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand," and hath exalted him to his eternal throne, and seated him on his own right hand, in glory ineffable ; so Christ likewise hath loved his Church with a love that passeth knowledge : for he not only died for her, but the glory which the Father hath given him, he hath given unto her also ; and thereby hath made her *joint-heir* together with himself, of his Father's kingdom, and glory ; intending hereafter that his bride, the Church, shall be seated at his right hand, and sit down with him upon  
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## A WEDDING SERMON. 15

His throne, even as he himself is now at God's right hand, and is set down with the Father upon his throne, See John xvii. 22. Rom. viii. 19. Rev. iii. 21. and hence he saith, "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you:" and therefore it follows, in the passage before us, "he gave himself for her, that he might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of *water* (a scripture sign and emblem of the Holy Spirit) by the *word*;" the word of truth, the gospel so called; which also is the ministration of the Spirit. Consequently the *written word*, and *Holy Spirit*, are not precisely *the same thing*, as some people have imagined; for they evidently differ as an *agent* and *instrument*, by which the agent acts; or as a channel differs from that which is conveyed thro' it, and ministred by it. By these therefore, viz. the *Word* and *Spirit* of Truth (the former as the instrument, and the latter as the agent) Christ sanctifies and cleanses his redeemed Church, from all her sins, and from all her uncleannesses; i. e. from all guilt and defilement, both original and actual: and he *doth it, expressly* to this end, "that, at last, he might present her unto himself, a glorious Church," complete in the beauties of holiness, "and without blemish; not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, and when these things are fully accomplished," then shall the  
Church,

Church, "the Lamb's wife," be prepared, and adorned, and made a fit bride for her royal husband, the glorious Son of God : that where he is, there she may be also. O happy day ! when the appointed time for the marriage of the Lamb is fully come, and his wife, (*by faith, and love, and patience*) hath made herself ready, Rev. xix. 7.—

Note, in different respects Christ is said to prepare the Church for himself ; and the Church to prepare herself for Christ.---But further ; it is not possible that the husband's love towards his wife, should, in all respects, equal the love of Christ towards his Church ; for that, as we have already observed, is a love which surpasseth knowledge ; and therefore the particle *καθως*, *even as*, must denote likeness or resemblance only, and not a full and absolute equality : yet, as Christ is made our pattern and example ; the husband's love towards his wife, if right and according to the will of God, must certainly bear some true resemblance unto the love wherewith Christ hath loved the Church. And therefore it follows, "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies ; he that loveth his wife, loveth himself."—Christ loved the Church as his own body, he loved her as himself ; he made her case his own ; he took her sins, and burdens, and debts upon himself, and hath fully discharged them all : for

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it is written, " Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows—he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed," Isa. liii. 4, 5. And again, he saith, the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanseth us from all sin, 1 John i. 7. Christ then is made of God, and become, the spiritual and everlasting Saviour of his Church: and here it is required of the husband to imitate his great example; by consulting, and regarding his wife's safety, honor, and happiness, even as his own. He is not only to labor, but if needful to suffer for her also: and not barely to supply her wants only; but according to his state and ability, to furnish her with every temporal convenience and comfort, conducive to her *real* honor and happiness, and that in the very same manner as he provides for himself: for so hath Christ freely suffered, and richly provided for his bride the Church. And the husband whose love towards his wife cannot, and doth not carry him thus far, is weak and defective, if it at all deserve the name of love; neither doth he obey the commandment which is here given him: But at the same time that he provides for the support and comfort of the body, he ought by no means to neglect, but to have a special regard to the interest and wel-

fare of her soul; endeavoring by every proper means, to promote her future and eternal happiness; and that in all kindness and prudence, long-suffering and patience: “for how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?” for though he cannot *atone for her sins, nor change her heart*; yet he may be the happy *instrument* and means of bringing her to the knowledge of the truth: let the husband, therefore, make use of every means which God hath divinely appointed, and wisely calculated, to promote and further his wife’s salvation; but let him take heed that he do not stumble and prejudice her against the truth, by assuming a power which God hath not given him; and let him beware also, lest by worldly compliances, he become an occasion of hardening her in sin, and so of leading her to ruin and destruction: wherefore he is not *so* to love his wife, as to transgress and offend his God in order to please her; but he is to indulge and please her only in such things as are right and lawful. For the man that commits sin, in order to please his wife, is so far from truly loving her, that, in reality, he hates her: even as the fond and foolish parent, who, instead of restraining and correcting, a *perverse and wicked child*, continues to indulge him to his utter ruin. The wise and faithful husband therefore, who  
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loves his wife as he ought, will not transgress the law of his God in order to please her, neither will he walk with her in the way that leads to the ruin of them both. God reprov'd and punished Adam for harkening to the voice of his wife, when she enticed him to eat of the forbidden fruit, contrary to the divine command.—And here it may be observed, that the relation between married persons is only according to the flesh:—it is natural, not spiritual; temporal, not eternal:—it respects the present life only, and cannot last long:—it ends, and is abolished at death, and then ceaseth for ever. A dead wife, or a dead husband, is no more to the surviving party, than any other dead person whatever; for “they who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage; for they are equal unto the angels,” Luke xx. 35, 36. Men, therefore, are to love their wives in the fear of God, and as Christ loved the Church, i. e. with understanding; from the best and noblest motives, and in a way of holiness: and after this manner the husband is commanded to love his wife, “as his own body;” willing, and endeavoring that in every lawful pleasure and earthly comfort, his wife should fully, and constantly be a partaker with him. It behoves him,

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therefore, to regard and study his wife's honor, peace, and happiness, through the whole of this life, as much as his own; and he that doth it not, is equally void both of reason and humanity: and because they two are one flesh, "the apostle further adds, he that loveth his wife, loveth himself; for no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church." Christ is loving, kind, and tender, towards his Church:—he *nourisheth*, that is, he provides for her, and supplies all her real wants:—he *cherisheth*, that is, he comforts, and carries himself tenderly towards her in times of affliction, sickness, and temptation: and, as a further reason for it, he adds, "For we are members of his (Christ's) body, of his flesh, and of his bones." Here the apostle plainly alludes to the type mentioned in Gen. ii. 23. for when Eve was brought unto Adam, he said, "This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh:" so Christ and the Church are both of one, Heb. ii. 11. i. e. of one nature, and of one Father: the Church therefore, being married and joined to Christ, are his true members, and one with him; and hence, he elsewhere says, "Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular," 1 Cor. xii. 27. We cannot indeed fully explain this divine mystery; for *we know but in part*;—  
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## A WEDDING SERMON. 21

but this we know, that Christ our Lord and Head, who now sits enthroned, at the right hand of God, in an human body (made spiritual, incorruptible, and glorious) doth, at the same time, unite himself to the Church, and the Church unto himself, thro' faith, by the eternal Spirit: which all-wise, all-powerful Spirit of God, Christ hath received of the Father, for his body's sake, that is, the Church. For God hath "given him all power both in heaven and earth, having put all things under his feet," and "given him to be head over all things to the Church;" "for it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell:" Matt. xxviii. 18. Eph. i. 22. Col. i. 19. And therefore "*of his fulness do we all receive, and grace for grace,*"---and thus our bodies are made the temples of the Holy Spirit, which we have of God (who is the head of Christ) and from him the Spirit is conveyed down to us by the medium, and ministration of Christ, the immediate Head of the Church: and hence it appears, that our bodies, as well as our souls, are the members of Christ; by our union with him, through the Spirit: see 1 Cor. vi. 15. and therefore, in this place also, he saith, "We are members of his body," &c. i. e. of his mystical body, the Church: for the natural body, as united to, and inhabited by, the rational soul; is, I conceive, an em-



## 22 A WEDDING SERMON.

blem and resemblance of Christ's body, the Church, as united to him, and inhabited by him : but we are not the very members of that *particular body* of Christ, which was nailed to the cross, and which he now wears in heaven : for that was Christ's *own proper body*, which God had prepared for him, in which he suffered, when *of the people there was none with him* ; which body also was both dead, and buried, and is now glorified. But this cannot with truth be affirmed of the Church, for none of them *actually* suffered when Christ was nailed to the cross, though he suffered for them as their *substitute* and *representative* ; but a *representative* is not the very *identical person*, or persons, represented by him. Therefore the *Church* was not *born* with *Christ* at *Bethlehem*, nor *crucified* with him on mount *Calvary*, as some mistaken men have imagined, and taught ; but Christ was born for her, that she afterwards might be born also ; not of the flesh, but of the spirit : and he died for her, that she might not die, but live through him.---Neither are the saints, in the church militant, now present in heaven with Christ their head : nor, are their bodies yet made spiritual and glorious ; “ for whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord.” “ This corruptible also must put on incorruption, and this mortal

## A WEDDING SERMON. 23

mortal must put on immortality." And when the bodies of the saints have experienced that divine and glorious change ; then shall be fulfilled, and not before, the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory." And then also shall be manifested, in all its fulness and glory, that most blessed and glorious union of Christ and the Church, which, whilst on earth, was pictured out and represented to us, by various shadows, types, and emblems ; and especially by the marriage of the first couple, *Adam and Eve*, whom God himself joined together, in their original state of created rectitude, purity, and glory. But even *that* was only a transient type, and faint shadow, of the far more *glorious* marriage between Christ and the Church ; as will be manifested in that day, when the sacred nuptials shall be solemnized with divine solemnity, and consummated in his Father's kingdom. And as there is no relation in nature so near, so perfect, and so sacred, as that which subsists between a man and his wife ; therefore the husband's care for his wife, and love towards her, ought to exceed that of all other relation whatever ; for even the love and duty which he owes to his parents, must give way to the greater duty which he owes to his wife, if it cannot be performed in a consistency with it : and hence it is

## 24 A WEDDING SERMON.

further added, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh." By their being joined together, they are both made, and declared to be one flesh; and that by an abiding and indissoluble union, so long as they both shall live on the earth: which *union* also *respects*, and was divinely intended to represent, *another* kind of *union* far more excellent; even that which is *spiritual* and *eternal*; which the apostle likewise hath himself declared, in that he saith, "this is a GREAT MYSTERY:" and further, by way of explanation, he hath here shewn, and plainly told us, what that mystery is; for he immediately adds, "but I speak concerning Christ and the Church," i. e. the spiritual marriage-union between Christ and the Church, is the MYSTERY, *antitype*, or *spiritual signification*, of the natural marriage-union between a man and his wife, who are *lawfully* joined together, according to the word, and will of God: thus the heavenly marriage is the *mystery* of that which is earthly;---it is the ultimate meaning of it, and what God intended by it. The apostle then adds, in the last place, "Nevertheless let every one of you in particular, so love his wife even as himself, and the wife see that

## A WEDDING SERMON. 25

that she reverence her husband." If these words be not a summary of the whole, comprehensive of all that the apostle had before declared, concerning the duties of wives towards their husbands, and of husbands towards their wives; I am then inclined to think, that he intended them as a warning and reproof to such persons, who might be so weak or perverse, as to neglect the holy commandment in the *letter* of it; because of its spiritual meaning, in the *mystery* of it. And thus some mistaken persons seem to slight and neglect the gospel ordinances of *water-baptism*, and the *Lord's supper*; because, in the *letter*, they are but *signs*, and symbols of things spiritual and heavenly: but it is both our wisdom and duty to regard the sign, and observe the letter, of these ordinances, not only because the Lord hath commanded it, but also because of the mystery represented by it: and we are sure that they are wisely adapted to the imperfect state of the Church militant; and are graciously intended to help and assist our present infirmities:---but when the substance, and that which is perfect is come; then, and not before, the shadow, and that which is imperfect, shall be done away: and thus also the duties of married persons, in the earthly state, are to be duly attended to, and mutually performed by, both parties, in the  
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## 26 A WEDDING SERMON.

fear of God ; and that because God hath commanded them, and for the sake of the mystery represented by them ; as well as for their own peace and comfort. But when the thing signified, even the marriage of the Lamb, with his bride, the Church, is fully come ; then the earthly shadow and sign of it shall flee away, and cease for ever.

HAVING now gone over the words, and finished my exposition of the context ; I intend, in the subsequent part of the discourse, to treat the subject in the following manner :

FIRST, I shall make some further observations on marriage, as a *divine institution*.

SECONDLY, Consider it as an *earthly shadow*, and *type* of things spiritual and heavenly.

THIRDLY, I intend to speak a little more particularly of the duties of married persons, from whence their mutual obligations for the due performance of them, will, I hope, more fully appear.

FIRST, then, I observe, that marriage is a *divine institution*. That its origin is from heaven, the scripture fully testifies ; God, not man,  
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## A WEDDING SERMON. 27

is the author of it; therefore every abuse of it, and every contempt that is cast upon it, is not against man, but against God. And as it hath God for its author, it certainly follows, that the ordinance is not only divine, but is also wisely calculated, and graciously provided, for our present benefit, relief, and comfort. “It is not good, saith the LORD GOD, that the man should be alone, I will make *a help meet for him.*”---It is not good that the earth should be without inhabitants, “for the Maker of it created it not in vain; he made it to be inhabited.” And, therefore, to our first parents he said, “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.” Marriage, then, is lawful, comely; and honorable, to men of all ranks, orders, and degrees; whether noble or ignoble, whether of the clergy or laity:—if not perverted or abused; it is decent, chaste, and pure, unto all persons, in all places, and in all ages of the world.—“It is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled,” Heb. xiii. 4. Therefore it is both weak and wicked in the Pope and his adherents, to make it a *sacrament*; and, at the same time, to deny the use of it unto their *clergy*. That doctrine which forbids to marry, is, most certainly, the *doctrine of devils*, and is one of the *marks* given us in scripture, whereby to know the grand apostacy from the christian faith, as  
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## 28 A WEDDING SERMON.

the apostle hath plainly taught us; for it directly opposes God's authority, prophanes his holy ordinance, and makes the sacred institution vain and useles: and not only so, but the Popish doctrine of *celebacy*, imposed upon their clergy, &c. is probably productive of every kind of forbidden, and abominable lust; and that in every excess, and degree of it. Is not this the city, namely, *ROME papal*, which is spiritually called Sodom," and "the MOTHER OF HARLOTS," because of her innumerable whoredoms, and uncleannesses? ---"and EGYPT," because of her long oppression of the people of God, and her unparalleled cruelties towards them: "where also our Lord was crucified," by a governor of *ROME Pagan*.----The Popish prohibition of marriage hath also a plain tendency to fill the world with a base and spurious offspring, "the seed of the adulterer and of the whore;" whereby the number of transgressors among men are increased, to the lasting shame and infamy, both of root and branch: for "if we walk contrary to God, he also will walk contrary to us;" and they who have not the gift of continency, Satan will undoubtedly tempt; and, *wo be to them whom Satan tempts, and God forsakes*.---

BUT

## A WEDDING SERMON. 29

BUT to return: The first marriage in the world was solemnized in paradise, between Adam and Eve; God himself was the sole author, and conductor of it. He acted as the Father of the woman, for he brought her unto the man, and at the same time (if I may be allowed the expression) performed the office of a priest in joining them together; if, as some suppose, none but the clergy, or persons belonging to the priesthood, ever had, and still have, a *divine right*, to join persons together in marriage: but seeing nothing of this appears from scripture, may we not rather suppose it to be a political device, or an innovation, of a corrupt clergy, to answer certain worldly views and purposes: for it seems to have been originally the act of the parents only, or of the nearest relations, with the free consent of both parties; which, in some measure, hath been revived amongst us, and is still observed by the people called *Quakers*: and I hope it will be allowed, that their marriages are as valid, and their children as legitimate, as if they had been joined together by a *clergyman*, and with all the ceremonies either of the church of England, or Rome.---Abraham made choice of a wife for his son Isaac; and Rebecca, with the approbation of her relations, consenting; went, and became his wife. And we do not find  
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## 30 A WEDDING SERMON.

that any of the modern ceremonies was then made use of, as of a ring, &c. and of having their hands joined together by a *stranger*, in order to make the marriage contract lawful and binding; for the obligation was mutual, and the contract equally binding without it: nor doth it appear, from that day to this, that God hath made any alteration in this divine ordinance; or added the least ceremony to it: and those who think that they have found out a better and safer way, than God hath appointed in his word, for the due performance of that sacred institution, as a means to prevent any evil which might arise from the abuse of it; will never be renowned either for their wisdom, or piety. But the world, as it now grows older, seems to grow more and more foolish, and corrupt: and we know that the apostacy of the Church of Rome hath abused, and perverted; and endeavored to make a worldly property of almost every thing in religion:—nevertheless, for peace sake, we recommend and approve of a man's complying with the customs and laws of those nations and countries, where, by the providence of God, he is placed, and fixed; so far as he may do it *lawfully*, and with a *good conscience*; but no further: for even Christ himself insisted not upon his privilege, but condescended to pay tribute,

## A WEDDING SERMON. 31

tribute, rather than offend the collectors of the Roman taxes, although they had no right to demand it of him. And thus far, when God is not dishonored, our neighbor not injured, and our conscience not hurt, we, ought, I think, to be "subject to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake."---Again, the first miracle that Christ wrought was at a marriage-feast. He not only gave a sanction to the divine institution, and honored it by his presence, but when the guests were in want of wine, by turning several vessels of water into the best wine, he amply and richly supplied their wants; and thus he manifested forth his glory, as the only begotten Son of God, who, being sent by his Father, was come down from heaven, to espouse a wife unto himself: and as it was expedient and required of him, he also willingly laid down his life for her.

MARRIAGE, therefore, without all dispute, is of divine origin, and hath the highest authority stamped upon it.—But it is matter of just lamentation, that multitudes of giddy young persons, rush precipitately into a married state, without due consideration; and afterwards, when too late, lament their rashness and folly. And are there not many others who enter into it, from the most base and corrupt motives;



## 32 A WEDDING SERMON.

tives; *merely* to serve their own worldly and carnal purposes; not having the fear of God before their eyes? But it is no wonder if, to such persons, marriage become an unsanctified ordinance; and instead of its being a relief to their natural and lawful desires; and becoming a remedy against fornication, and every other forbidden lust, they still remain under the power of them. Hence they frequently turn out adulterers and adulteresses, "whom God will judge:"---at least, perpetual noise and clamor, contention and strife, are the sad and bitter effects of such unhappy marriages---for "the curse of the LORD is in the house of the wicked." But God's ordinances are always blessed to those persons who reverence, and observe them, according to his word; but to the proud, the deceitful, and disobedient, they are not blessed; because they despise his authority in them, and refuse to be governed by the only Sovereign, and wise, and righteous Judge of the world.

BUT, I proceed, **SECONDLY**, to consider marriage as an *earthly shadow, and type* of things spiritual, and heavenly.

THE apostle having said, that a man and his wife shall be one flesh, he immediately adds;  
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“ This is a *great mystery* ; but I speak of Christ and the Church,” i. e. the *spiritual union* between Christ and the Church, (whereby they are made *one spirit*) is the mystery, or antitype of the *natural union* between a man and his wife, whereby they are made *one flesh*.

THE word *mystery* properly signifies that which is *secret* or hidden ; and is indifferently applied to things earthly or heavenly ; both sacred and prophane, good and bad : thus we read of “ the mystery of iniquity ” --- “ the mystery of Babylon the great, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth : ” and, on the other hand, we read of “ the mystery of godliness ” --- “ the mystery of God, even the Father ; and of Christ : ” --- “ the mystery of the gospel,” &c. Now a *religious* mystery is a *divine secret* not yet discovered and made known, in which sense it is chiefly used throughout the scriptures ; and most commonly relates either to the will, or counsel, or kingdom of God. And these divine mysteries or secrets, are in scripture, often set forth, and represented to us by some natural type or image, and frequently by parables, which are mostly taken from the known practice, and customs of men, &c. See Isa. v. 1---4. Jer. xviii. 1---4. Matt. xiii. 3---51. xxi. 33---43. xxii. 1---14.

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Now

## 34 A WEDDING SERMON.

Now *that* which the type or image signifies and represents, is the mystery of it. And when the thing signified by any type, figure, or emblem, is expounded, opened, and revealed unto us : then it is no longer a mystery, because the divine secret is discovered, and made known :---For a *mystery is that which is hid, and is not made known.* Yet, with respect to others, to whom the secret is not revealed, it remains a mystery still. And thus, to proud and scornful men, who are offended at the doctrine of the cross, i. e. of Christ crucified ; and stumble at the word :---unto them the gospel mysteries are not revealed : and therefore to his disciples, Christ saith, “Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but unto them it is not given :” and again, speaking to his Father, he saith, “I thank thee, O Father, LORD of heaven and earth, that thou hast *hid* these things from the *wise* and *prudent*, and hast *revealed* them unto *babes*.”---By revelation also God made known to his holy apostles, and especially to Paul, the mystery of calling the Gentiles, and many other divine secrets or mysteries ; and by him they were afterwards made known to the churches for their edification, and comfort :---Thus to the Romans he saith, “I would not that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, that blindness in part  
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is happened unto Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in:" and to the Corinthians he saith, " behold, I shew you a mystery, we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." Our Lord also explained to John the mystery of the seven golden candlesticks, and the seven stars, i. e, he told him what was meant and signified by them: so the mystery of the bread and wine at the Lord's supper, is the body and blood of Christ; and the mystery of our *eating* that bread, and *drinking* that wine, or the thing signified by it, is this, viz. that the souls of believers are spiritually refreshed, and strengthened, and live by faith on the Son of God; as having suffered for our sins, and thereby reconciled us unto God.

Thus by a natural marriage and union, according to the flesh; the scripture signifies and represents to us, the spiritual marriage, and union between Christ and the Church: and the latter is the mystery of the former. And with the utmost propriety doth the apostle call it a *great* mystery; for all other mysteries relating to Christ, and the Church, are, as it were, summed up in it, and comprehended by it. For all the love and grace of God the Father, and of his Son Jesus Christ, towards the Church, which have at any time been set forth,

and represented by various types and emblems, are here brought to a final and happy issue; and are expressed in all the power and glory of them: for then shall their union and communion, both with the Father, and the Son, be completed in the heavenly state, and perfected for evermore. Then also shall the prayer of Christ for them, be fully answered, when to the Father he said; I pray, "that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee:"---"And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, *even as we are one*, I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." Then shall that scripture also be well understood by the Church, and fulfilled in them, where it is written, "Thy Maker is thy husband; JEHOVAH of hosts is his name---the God of the whole earth shall he be called." And again, to the Jewish Church he saith, "As a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall *thy sons* (the Gentile converts) *marry thee*: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee,"---"Is he the God of the Jews only, is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:"---for "God was in Christ reconciling the *world* unto himself." And from hence it appears, that God himself, even the Father, reconciles and saves, unites

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## A WEDDING SERMON. 37

or marries the Church unto himself, in, and by Jesus Christ. And for this cause also, "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell:---that by him he might reconcile all things unto himself," Col. i. 19, 20. for as God is the head of Christ, so he hath made Christ the head of the Church; that we, who are joined to Christ our head, by the Spirit; might also, by the same Spirit, be joined unto God, the head of Christ, in him: for when Christ ascended up on high, having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he poured him forth upon his disciples; and thus he gave gifts unto men, that the Lord God might dwell among them: compare Psalm lxxviii. 18. with Eph. iv. 8. and Acts ii. 33. Therefore, in Christ Jesus, the whole Church, (made up both of Jews and Gentiles) "are builded together for an habitation of God, through the Spirit," Eph. ii. 22. And as all things are of ONE GOD, even the FATHER; and all things by ONE LORD JESUS CHRIST: it hath pleased God, by the most expressive types, and proper emblems, to represent, and set forth the mystery of Christ and the Church, as joined together, and made one Spirit, by the most intimate, and glorious union: and therefore he made the first man a figure and type of Christ, and the first woman a figure and type of the Church; which, I think, is plain from

### 38 A WEDDING SERMON.

the following scriptures :---“ Who (Adam) is the figure of him (Christ) that was to come :” ---“ for as by the disobedience of one many were made finners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous,” Rom. v. 14. 19.---“ for as by man came death, so by man also came the resurrection of the dead : for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive :”---“ the first Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit,” 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22. 45. That the Church also is represented by a woman, and often called by that name, is not only plain from the passage under consideration, but from many other scriptures; such as these : “ The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, who made a marriage for his son,” Matt. xxii. 1. “ I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you a chaste virgin to Christ,” 2 Cor. xi. 2.---“ He that hath the bride is the bridegroom,” John iii. 29. ---“ There appeared a great sign in heaven, a woman, that is the Church, cloathed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars,” Rev. xii. 1. “ Come hither (saith the angel to John) and I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife,” Rev. xxi. 9.---Now when God had created the woman, of Adam’s very bone and flesh, and

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had made her *another* intelligent *person*, both distinct and *separate* from him, he afterwards brought her unto the man, as a help meet for him, and joined them together; and *then* they were made *one*; not one person, but *one flesh*: for after creation the man and the woman were and ever will remain, *two*, distinct *persons*: but when they are joined together in marriage (not before) they are always to be considered, and are but *one flesh*: for he saith, "A man shall be joined unto his wife, and (then) they two *shall be one*:" he saith not, in the *past* tense, they two *were* one; but in the *future*, they two *shall be one*, i. e. one flesh: thus their being made *one*, and declared so to be, was not the *cause*, but the *effect* of their being joined together; for, before, they were *two*, and not one, flesh. Neither were the parties brought together and married by a compulsive restraint, without their own free and mutual consent; for it is evident that Adam received Eve from the hand of her Creator, with the utmost freedom, and gladness of heart: and there is no room to doubt but Eve also embraced her husband, with equal satisfaction and joy. But those marriages which mercenary and cruel parents, too often force upon their children from lucrative and worldly motives, in opposition to their own inclination and free consent; are both unnatural, unreasonable, and un-

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scriptural : for in every proper union, between intelligent beings, the free consent of both parties is absolutely necessary ; such marriages, therefore, which are according to the word and will of God, are free and unconstrained, whereby they are *made one* both by the concurrence of God's ordinance, and of their own voluntary consent : and of such he saith, " they are no more twain, but one flesh ;" which *oneness* is made and appointed of God, to be perpetual and abiding : and therefore he adds, " What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Now, if these things be considered with relation to Christ and the Church, which I conceive is the mystery of them, we shall find that the Church is regenerated or begotten of God, by a *new creation* ; and is afterwards brought or led unto Christ, and then, being joined to the Lord Jesus, she is made one with him ; and that by a perpetual bond of eternal union which shall never be dissolved.---But previous to her *new creation*, and spiritual marriage with Christ, she was not united to him, nor one with him ; but rather averse to him and separate from him : for until God, by his Spirit, had opened her understanding to know Christ, and inclined her heart to receive him, she was both ignorant of him, and an enemy to him.---And every species

## A WEDDING SERMON. 41

cies of *rational union*, by whatever means, or agency effected; must, in my opinion, arise, from that knowledge and love which the parties have one towards the other: for how should *spirits* be united; though one party be *willing*, if the other remain *unwilling*? Therefore, it seems to me impossible for intelligent persons to be united, unless their knowledge and love of each other, be reciprocal and mutual: for what is *union* but a being *joined together*, by *mutual love*? therefore the opinion of an *eternal actual union*, between Christ and his Church, which some people hold and teach, is, in my judgment, both irrational and unscriptural: and these things, I humbly conceive, are plainly declared and fully evinced, by the following scriptures, “Ye were not a people—not beloved ----had not obtained mercy,” Rom. ix. 25. 1 Pet. ii. 10.---but “were enemies,”---“dead in trespasses and sins,”----“without Christ, and without God in the world,”---“but now in Christ Jesus, ye who once were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ,” Rom. v. 10. Eph. ii. 1. 3. 12, 13. Col. i. 21.---“Born again, not of the flesh, but of the Spirit ---not of the will of man, but of God.” And speaking of the Church, to the Son, he saith, “Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power,”---and Christ himself saith, “All that  
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the Father *giveth* me, shall, or *will* come, to me."---and again, "No man can come unto me, except the Father who hath sent me, *draw* him : "---but "every one who hath heard and learned of the Father, *cometh* unto me."---" and *they* shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand, my Father who gave them me is *greater than all*, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."---And therefore the apostle exhorts the faithful in Christ Jesus, "to give thanks unto the Father, because he hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear son," Col. i. 12, 13.---The woman also was joined in marriage unto her husband, that they might be fruitful, and multiply in the earth : and for a similar cause the Church also is joined to Christ by a spiritual marriage, that she might be fruitful in all good works---for to his disciples he saith, "Without me ye can do nothing." ---"Ye, therefore, my brethren, are become dead to the law, by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." Rom. vii. 4. Therefore, as the woman, without the man, cannot conceive and bear children ; so, *spiritually*

## A WEDDING SERMON. 43

ually, no one, *without Christ*, can bring forth the fruits of righteousness and true holiness, such as the gospel requires, and which are acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ.

AGAIN, "God made them male and female :"—but one woman for one man : and why but one ? that there might be a holy, and a godly seed, Mal. ii. 15. 1 Cor. vii. 14. In like manner, God, hath given unto Christ his son, but *one bride*, even the Church ; for whom Christ gave himself, and for whom he also prayed, and for them only ; saying, " I pray for them ; I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine : and all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them," John xvii. 9, 10. " the Church also is declared to be, the *fulnes* of him that filleth all in all," Eph. i. 23.—From these considerations, I think it is most clear and certain, that the natural marriage, and union between a man and his wife ; is an earthly shadow and type, of the spiritual marriage, and union between Christ and the Church : which, when the earthly one ceases, and is remembered no more ; will be made manifest in all its divine lustre and glory : But I proceed,

THIRDLY,

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THIRDLY, to speak somewhat more particularly of the duties of married persons, from whence also their mutual obligations for the due performance of them, will, I hope, more fully appear:—If the things which have been already spoken be rightly considered, and religiously observed; you will not think the apostle's exhortation strange, nor the precept hard, when he saith, “Let every one of you in particular, so love his wife, even as himself,” i. e. as another, or *second-self*; or else it may mean, as much, and in the very same manner, as he loves himself: And “let the wife see that she reverence her husband,” *φοβηται respectfully fear*; i. e. fear to offend, or disobey her husband, from the duty which she owes, and from the love and respect which she bears towards him: and that because he is her husband: whom God hath made her head, and who, in that relation, represents also the Lord Christ, as head of the Church.—The apostle, elsewhere, mentions other reasons also, why the woman ought to be subject: as *first*, because the man was created *before* the woman: “Adam was first formed, then Eve.” *Secondly*, Because the woman was taken out of the man, and was made for him: “The man is not *of* the woman, but the woman *of* the man; neither was the man created *for* the woman, but the woman *for* the man.”

*Thirdly,*

*Thirdly*, Because the woman was deceived by the serpent, and first broke the law of her Maker, and then became a tempter to her own husband: "for Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, was in the transgression." Now, from these scriptures it seems to be highly reasonable and expedient, that the man should *lawfully* rule his wife, and that the woman should be in lawful subjection unto her husband: And surely nothing but the pride of that *arch apostate*, "called the devil and satan," who first broke the order of heaven, and tempted our common mother Eve, to transgress the law of her Maker; can stir up resentment in any female mind against the divine precept, or cause her to be offended at it.—But, I hope, none of the daughters of Sarah will be offended at the sacred injunction; for they cannot but know, that their God hath wisely appointed, and graciously intended it, both for the good of the wife, as well as for the honor of the husband; and for the mutual peace and happiness of them both: nor doth the submission, here commanded, extend itself any further than to things lawful and temporal.—In grace they are on an equal footing, "for, in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female:" and at death, this *marriage bond* is dissolved, and the obligation ceases for ever: for yet a little while, and "they that  
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have wives, (and they that have husbands too) will be as though they had none."---Death, approaching death, will determine, and put an end to all these earthly distinctions : but in this present, and passing world ; God, who is wise, and just, and good, hath ordained, and established these distinctions ; both for his own glory, and for the good of those that fear his name,

AGAIN, "The wife hath not power over her own body, but the husband."---Adultery, under the law, was punished with death, and the reason of it is both just and manifest, not only because the injured party receives much greater wrong both from the adulterer and adulteress, than from him who robs him of his money only, which loss may be repaired ; and therefore they are more worthy of death than a *highwayman*, or a *thief* ; but chiefly because marriage is a divine ordinance, emblematical of the heavenly marriage between Christ and the Church : consequently, the sin of adultery extends to the thing signified. For when the wife adulterously receives a stranger to her bosom, that is not her husband ; she thereby not only denies her husband's propriety in her, and power over her ; but she denies also that Christ is the only husband, and true head of the Church : and therefore by her adultery she does what in her lies to

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## A WEDDING SERMON. 47

countenance and justify the Church, should she prove unchaste and unfaithful towards her Lord and Saviour. For in every divine type and ordinance, by which things spiritual and heavenly, are described and represented to us; he that abuses the ordinance in the sign and letter of it, abuses also the thing signified: and for this cause they who eat and drink unworthily at the Lord's supper, are said to be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, because they prophane or abuse the signs and symbols of it; and some of the Corinthians seem to have been guilty of this great sin.—The wife then is here commanded to submit herself unto her own husband, as unto the Lord. Now the Lord Christ hath all power both in heaven and earth: and God hath commanded every knee to bow to him: and they who will not bow to JEHOVAH's King, even to, JESUS, whom God hath made both Lord and Christ; will at last find, that he hath put an iron rod into his hand, which shall break his enemies in pieces. God's established order is also manifest, for it is written, "The head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God," 1 Cor. xi. 3. Seeing then this order is divine, and the establishment is wholly of God, how wicked, and foolish is it for any one to think hardly of it, or to rebel against it? Besides,

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in this subjection there is nothing slavish, dishonorable, or injurious. If the wife, therefore, rightly consider and know the things that belong to her true honor and interest; she will not stumble at it, but heartily approve, and readily concur with it :---“ By humility, and the fear of the LORD, are riches, honor, and life :”—“ for wisdom’s ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.”—Moreover,

God hath appointed duties for the husband also, which he hath here commanded him to perform. Therefore the husband is under an obligation to the wife, as well as the wife to the husband : and consequently he is as accountable to God for his conduct, as the wife is for her’s : for as the wife hath not power of her own body but the husband ; so neither hath the husband power of his own body but the wife : therefore adultery or whoredom, on either side, is an act of injustice and wrong done to the other party, as well as a direct violation of the law of God. ---“ Be not deceived, God is not mocked ; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap,”---Gal. 6. Now the duties which God hath laid on the husband, are, I conceive, much greater than what he hath laid on the weaker vessel : wherein also is manifested, both the wisdom and goodness of God, whose tender mercies

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mercies are over all his works, and who lays on us no greater burdens than he hath given us strength to bear.--And whereas God hath expressly commanded the husband to love his wife, *even as himself*; and set Christ before him as a pattern, and bid him copy after his example; he cannot plead ignorance of his duty: but must be without excuse if he neglect to perform it. The husband, therefore, is under divine obligations to love, and support his wife; and that not only in the bloom of youth, when comely and pleasant, and in the time of health and affluence: but also in sickness and poverty; and when under affliction and trouble --- *in adversity as well as prosperity*-----and that through the whole term of life, for so is his agreement and covenant with her. Thus hath Christ also loved the Church,---“having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.” John. xiii. 2.---A change therefore in the wife’s condition, or circumstances, (through infirmity) ought not in the least to occasion in the husband a change of disposition, or cause him to alter his carriage towards her: but at all times, and in all conditions, he must still endeavor to make her life comfortable, and happy. And, should he, at any time, be tempted, and through the strength of remaining selfishness, pride, or corruption, be inclined to neglect his

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afflicted,

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afflicted, complaining, helpless wife :---let him consider the example of Christ; recollect the divine command; and fear to offend his God. ---Is he pressed hard, and borne down by the violence of temptation, and in imminent danger of being quite overcome by the united powers, and force of sin, and satan :—let him diligently search the scriptures for direction, and cry to the strong for strength; for it is written, “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”—“draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you,”—“for sin shall not have dominion over you, because ye are not under the law, but under grace,” James iv. 7, 8. Rom. vi. 14.—If the wife, especially in the time of affliction, should some times act imprudently, be pettish and impatient; yet the wise and faithful husband, will no more expose her infirmities; nor exercise severity towards her: than he would wish to have his own infirmities exposed (and what husband is wholly without them?) or the wounds and diseases of his own body handled roughly :---but in the very same manner as he treats the one, in order to preserve and heal it; even so let him treat the other likewise: for “they two are one flesh.” Yet he ought not to countenance, or encourage her in that which is wicked, immoral, or profane; any more than himself. For if the husband be a man that truly fears God, he  
knows

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knows sin to be the greatest of evils, and abhors it in himself; and therefore because he loves his wife, he will discountenance, and reprove it in her also. And for the same reason, the dutiful and affectionate wife ought, in the spirit of meekness, to reprove sin in her husband likewise: and every godly husband will take it kindly at her hand, and even thank her for it. For *true love* is neither blind nor brutish; but guided by understanding, and conducted with judgment. For the Lord Christ doth not countenance his Church, in any sin whatever: but, if she walk contrary to him, (which is both her fault and her folly) he will then walk contrary to her; and that because he loves her: wherefore he saith, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." And this he doth to bring them to a sense of their dangerous errors, that they may repent, and turn from them, and live; for which kind and faithful reproofs they will afterwards both love, and thank him the more. In like manner, every considerate, and christian wife, when she is made truly sensible of the evil tendency of her conduct, will afterwards thank her husband, that he did not indulge her, to her ruin; and approve of his carriage towards her: and will thank God also for giving her, not only an affectionate, but also a wise and understanding husband; who, by laying a proper



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restraint upon her, hath been the means of preserving her from ruin, and destruction.

AGAIN, "Because the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife:" Therefore as the wife is for the husband, so is the husband for the wife: and thus the Church is for Christ, and Christ for the Church, and that in all things; and hence he saith, "The body is not for fornication, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body," 1 Cor. vi. 13.--Therefore, "Defraud you not one another, except it be with consent for a time, to give yourselves to fasting and prayer, and come together again."—"But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doth it destroyeth his own soul. A wound and dishonor shall he get, and his reproach shall not be wiped away," Prov. vi. 32, 33. Wherefore, "take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth," Mal. ii. 15. ---And, speaking of divorce, our Lord assures us, that, "whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery;" consequently, whosoever shall take, and *co-habit* with another woman besides his own wife, committeth adultery also. Thus not only the temporary Jewish law of divorce is now repealed, but the poly-  
gamy

gamy and concubinage also, which was practised and connived at, under that dispensation, is plainly disallowed, and condemned by the gospel: for the *darkness* of former times is past, and the *true light* now shineth, whereby all things are made manifest, and restored also, by Christ, to their original simplicity:—for God made them male and female—therefore “to avoid fornication, or whoredom, let every man have his own wife, and every woman her own husband.”— But how contrary is all this to the practice of many amongst us!—Is not our land then full of adulterers, &c? And shall not the LORD be avenged on such a nation as this?— Under the law, adultery was made a capital offence, and accordingly was punished with death: from whence, I think, it plainly follows, that the marriage-union, by that offence, was supposed to be dissolved; and the obligation, which before was mutual, made void. And, as that complicated crime is not made capital by the laws of this land, the legislator hath provided for the relief of the injured party, by admitting of a *divorce*: but as a divorce cannot be obtained without considerable expence, none but the rich and opulent, however greatly injured, can obtain relief, or receive any benefit from it. Is there not then a manifest defect in this branch of the law; unless it

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could be supposed that none but the opulent, and great ones of the world, were capable of committing that sin : but as it is too plain to be denied, that many of the lower class likewise, are equally guilty of it ; surely a divorce, if just and lawful, ought to be within the reach of the meanest subject ; and therefore, to be obtained with little, or no expence whatever : for why should not the injured peasant, or tradesman, or mechanic, receive the benefit of the laws of his country, as well as the rich and great ? And whereas adultery was made death under the law, without distinction of persons, and without exception : certainly divorce, which is a less punishment, is every way justifiable and lawful.---Moreover, the adulterous wife seems to represent an unfaithful, and apostate Church ; as on the other hand, an adulterous husband represents a false Christ ; and therefore both of them are to be destroyed. “ The adulterer and the adulterers shall surely be put to death,” Lev. xx. 10. Acts v. 36, 37. Nevertheless, their sin is not in itself unpardonable, for they who sincerely repent, and turn to God ; confessing and forsaking their sin, shall assuredly find mercy. See 2 Sam. xii. 13. Jer. iii. 1, 12, 13. 20. 22. Matt. xii. 31. John. viii. 11. Rev. ii. 22.---But I must draw towards a close.

IF

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IF both the husband and the wife sincerely endeavor, and mutually agree to observe, and obey, this heavenly law of humility, and submission; of love, and kindness;—if you seek peace and constantly pursue it, according to the divine word and commandment: there is no doubt but the blessing of God, the God of love and peace, will be with you; and then, however you may meet with trials and troubles abroad, you will be always sure of finding comfort, and peace at home:---and without all dispute, *war abroad, and peace at home; is better than peace abroad, and war at home.*

AND I hope, that you, *my friend*, who have lately entered into this *new relation*, and at whose request this sermon was preached, will be eminently exemplary, as a husband; and be abundantly blessed with every divine blessing necessary to make the marriage state truly comfortable, and happy. And, as the words of the text also were your own choice, may I not likewise hope, that it was your earnest desire, and will be your constant endeavor, to fulfil the precept, and discharge the duty, which God, by his apostle, hath here given you.---As your interests are united, so must your hearts be likewise. Both riches and honor, health and happiness, come from God; there-

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fore seek his face, call upon him, and bless his name continually : and, at the same time, let it be your earnest care to please God in all things, and to offend him in nothing.---Pray with and for each other ; and that with all perseverance : without ceasing and without fainting. God is faithful, he waiteth to be gracious, he loveth uprightness, and he knoweth them that trust in him. And have you not, my dear Sir, already begun as you would wish, and intend to finish?---I hope you have.---A good beginning promises a good ending---yet prepare for temptation, for he saith, “Such shall have trouble in the flesh.”---There are trials *peculiar* to a married state, (and doubtless they are necessary for us) but none can rightly, or fully know them, except from experience only. Therefore, prepare for them, that when they come, and you begin to feel their force, you may not be surprised at them, nor fall under them---“If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small.” You are now called to bear not your own infirmities, troubles, and burdens only ; but those of your wife also.---The doctrine, instruction, and discipline of the cross, is indeed what few can bear : yet the excellent lessons of self-denial and moderation, humility and meekness, patience and long-suffering ;  
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are rightly taught, and truly learnt in no other school whatever : ----“ Tribulation worketh patience.” ----Watch therefore ; ----watch and fear;---watch, fear, and pray always; looking unto Jesus, and he will keep you.--- You know your rule — the written word; you know your pattern—Christ’s example.--- You know also, that your strength is in him, and must be received from him :—“ be not, therefore, overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.”—But if what I have spoken on this subject (which, though important, is very rarely treated of) be according to scripture, and the analogy of faith, I hope and pray, that a divine blessing may attend it to the hearers in general; and that it may be made particularly useful, not to yourself only, but also to your *amiable consort* ; who, if I mistake not, hath already begun to adorn herself with the most excellent of all ornaments, even “ that of a meek and quiet spirit :” Go on then, my dear Madam, praying, and endeavoring, in the strength of Christ, to increase therein yet more and more ; and having adorned yourself with these divine virtues, and heavenly ornaments, wear them continually : never lay them aside. For these, together with chaste and constant affection towards your husband ; with humility, discretion, and charity ; will complete your  
character

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character as a christian wife : and, through grace, will enable you likewise, to discharge every relative duty, whether it respect your husband, or children, or servants ; and that with ease and satisfaction both to yourself, and to all around you. Study, then, I beseech you, to get a thorough acquaintance with these christian virtues, until you find your whole soul under their delightful influence—until they appear as so many *gems* and *jewels*, sparkling and shining through the whole of your daily walk and conversation ; to the glory of God, the honor of your husband, and the increasing comfort of your own soul.---These heavenly ornaments you may wear in every place, and carry about you, wherever you go.---They suit,--they shine, in all places, and all company. ---They can neither be tarnished nor lost ; nor can any one rob you of them---These are the the most *brilliant* and abiding ornaments ; and in these consist the true beauty and excellency of every married wife. Happy is the woman that is adorned with them ! May not such a one, without flattery, be called an angel ? for this is that beauty which is from above, and is abiding ; which age cannot wrinkle, nor time deface : but as for all other beauties, where this is wanting, however they may be reckoned, and termed angels, by their flattering

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## A WEDDING SERMON. 59

ing and deluded admirers ; they will be found upon trial, to resemble none but the *fallen angels* only : for their superficial skin-deep beauty will fade as the rose, and perish as the blossom, scorched and blasted with the east wind---“ Favor is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman that feareth the *Lord* she shall be praised.”

Now what hath been more largely treated of, in the foregoing discourse, so far as it relates to the duties of the husband and wife, may be briefly summed up in the following particulars :

1. LET both parties make it their constant endeavor to act from a principle of *conscience*, walking in the fear of God, and aiming to please him in all things. Let the wife regard the Church as her pattern ; and let the husband consider Christ as his example.

2. LET neither party look for perfection in the other ; for both are fallen creatures, both have their infirmities, and both of you are liable to be tempted : therefore be ye always prepared, and ready to make all reasonable allowance, and excuse for the weaknesses and imperfections, which may sometimes appear in  
each

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each others words or actions. --- Mutual indulgence and forbearance, will, on certain occasions, be found needful on both sides. And who is there that is not ready to bear with, and forgive the complaints, and weaknesses of his own flesh?

3. LET all groundless suspicions, and jealousies be rejected and condemned on both sides; and suffer no one to sow the seeds of discord, or stir up strife between you. Let flatterers, tale-bearers, and busy-bodies, never be reckoned among the number of your real friends and acquaintance.

4. IF an angry or provoking expression happen to drop from either side, let not the other immediately notice or regard it; unless it be absolutely necessary: for it is better to be despised and treated with contempt; than to be overcome with passion, and kindle a flame which may not be easily extinguished: for though all things be lawful, yet all things are not expedient. If admonition or reproof be judged necessary, let it never be given in the heat of anger, but deferred till afterwards; when it may be done coolly, with judgment and without sin,---and, if possible, let it never be given in public, and before company; but  
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in private, and when the parties are alone by themselves.

5. NEVER aggravate nor put the worst construction upon one another's words or actions, though they may seem harsh and provoking : but rather excuse the unkindness, and soften their acrimony, by putting the best and most favorable meaning on them which you possibly can, consistent with truth and a good conscience---for Love covereth all faults.---We may also mistake the intent and meaning of the speaker ;---therefore be not hasty, and rash in judging—" he that is slow to anger, is of great understanding."

6. If one party should neglect, or refuse to discharge those duties which God hath commanded, let not the other do so too : if the husband be passionate, or a swearer, or a drunkard, &c. let not the wife be the same. Why should she destroy her own soul, because the husband is resolved to destroy his ?

7. LET not the faithful and prudent wife be counted unworthy of being made acquainted with her husband's private and temporal affairs ; nor of being often advised with, and consulted by him : and, in some cases, of being followed,  
when



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when her advice is reasonable, and proper. Abraham, at God's command, hearkened to the voice of his wife, and yet Sarah did not afterwards take upon her to dictate to her husband; nor usurp authority over him. Manoaah also, received help and encouragement, by his wife's just remark, and observation.---God formed Eve and brought her unto Adam, to be a *help* meet for him.

8. LET the wife never be counted, or treated as a slave, or servant; but honored and respected as the mistress of the family :---“ Giving honor to the wife as to the weaker vessel, and as heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered.”---When Hagar, Sarah's handmaid, behaved insolent towards her, she complained of it to her husband: and Abraham said unto her, “ Behold, thy maid is in thine hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee.”

9. IF by any means, a misunderstanding, or breach should happen, between the husband and the wife; let it be rectified, and healed, as soon as possible.--Here delays are dangerous.--Let neither party be obstinate, nor unforgiving.--That which excels in grace and wisdom, will be always most ready to devise, and propose conciliating measures, and the most forward to promote them :---“ He that covereth

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covereth transgression seeketh love ;" or peace, the effect of love : " and he that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city."

10. LET each other's true honor, peace, and interest, be mutually desired, and diligently pursued ; and that in all circumstances, and with all perseverance. As persons truly yoked, help and assist each other : considering your gains, or losses ; joys, or sorrows, as reciprocal and mutual.—" Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."—" The wise shall inherit glory, but shame shall be the promotion of fools."

BUT, before I quite finish my discourse, I am desirous of addressing myself to the *unmarried*, and younger part of my auditory ; and wish to give them a few words of advice, which, through a divine blessing, may prove both seasonable and profitable to them.

AND, First, I beseech and exhort you, my young friends, not to be rash and hasty in this important matter---it is most important in itself, and weighty in its consequences---of all the natural relations, engagements, and connexions in life ; none are so important, and weighty as this. The happiness or misery of a person's whole

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whole life doth, in a great measure, often depend upon it. Therefore, I advise you carefully to shun and avoid all *improper* familiarity; and enter into no connexions, *with a view to marriage*, in the *very youthful* part of life—a modest and prudent *reserve* is comely, and commendable in all young persons, of both sexes.—It is much easier to prevent a fire, than to extinguish it, after it is once kindled.—If the affections be engaged and placed on an object (it matters not how foolishly and improperly fixed) they are then apt to carry the person violently towards it, though it be to his own ruin.—Lust and passion are headstrong things: they will neither be awed by threats, nor convinced by arguments; they are deaf to all reason and remonstrance. Would you therefore, escape the fatal snare?—take warning, and be wise in time:—suffer not yourselves to be led by self-will, nor governed by lawless passion; but let understanding direct, and prudence guide, your steps. I exhort you, therefore, to avoid; carefully avoid, all improper intimacy; and enter into no connexion with any person whatever, *with a view to marriage*; without previously consulting and advising with your best and nearest friends and relations.---“Be not wise in your own conceit,”---and your *best friends* will never oppose your honest designs; if the person proposed

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posed be suitable and proper : nor will they make unreasonable objections.]

SECONDLY, if you have any religion yourself, never seek, nor wish to be connected with a person that hath no religion ; much less with one that is *bigotted* to a corrupt and *false religion* : for as a union of heart and sentiment in religious matters, is one of the strongest bonds of peace ; and a source of the most rational, and abiding joy and consolation : so, on the contrary, where persons are various, and disunited in heart and opinion about religion, every other bond of peace is easily broken : and their religious difference often becomes the occasion, and cause of mutual hatred, and endless strife between them : for how can two comfortably walk, much less dwell together, except they be agreed ? “ Be not therefore unequally yoked with unbelievers, for what fellowship hath light with darkness ? and what concord hath Christ with Belial ? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel ? ” 2. Cor. vi. 14, 15.

THIRDLY, next to religion, consider the person's temper, and disposition ; and endeavor, by all proper means, to get a thorough knowledge of it : for a slothful and sullen disposition is burdensome and grievous----that which is

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proud and obstinate; over-bearing, turbulent, and perverse---and a selfish worldly spirit is never satisfied.---But that temper and disposition which is prudently meek and gentle, frank and open, active and generous, compassionate and kind, forbearing, and forgiving; is amiable and pleasant: and far more to be desired than a large fortune. These then are the tempers and qualifications chiefly to be regarded, and sought after, by every one that wishes to live comfortable and happy in a married state ---living in the fear of God.---For beauty will fade, and riches waste and perish; and where those religious and moral excellencies are wanting; riches, instead of proving a real blessing, and comfort to the possessors; are often an occasion of additional mischief and sorrow: but when a person is truly religious, and of a meek and amiable temper, every other defect, is, in a great measure, supplied; for these are essential to the person, and abiding; but the others, viz. wealth, and external beauty, are merely accidental, and transient: they will soon; very soon, droop, and fade, and perish:---yet no one, in my opinion, ought to marry another, whose person is *disagreeable* to him, or to her: lest it should prove a snare to them.---But, after all; the most suitable and happy marriages in this world, are not without their trials and troubles



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troubles.---Be not, therefore, my young friends, carried away with dreams, and fancies---all is not gold that glitters---the world is full of counterfeits---that which seems to promise, and from whence we expect to receive, the greatest pleasure and happiness; often proves, upon trial, quite the reverse; and becomes a source and occasion of sorrow and distress unknown before. Be not, therefore, hasty in this matter; for in this case, delays are seldom dangerous.—It is a matter, as was before observed, most interesting, and important; and no wise person will engage in a matter of importance, but with great caution; and after having duly weighed, and well considered it. If you know not, and never should know, the joys and comforts of a married state; remember, at the same time, that you are also free from the trials, and cares, and troubles of it. For no earthly condition, or relation whatever, is wholly free from vexation and sorrow.—Its comforts are carnal and earthly, not spiritual and heavenly; transient and precarious, not permanent and abiding. Wherefore then shouldst thou set thine heart on such inconsistent, and uncertain, and perishing delights? The apostle hath plainly declared that, in his judgment, they who remain single and unmarried, are better and happier, than they who enter into a marriage state, because they

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have less care and trouble : yet, as every man hath his proper gift of God, and on some the gift of continence is not bestowed ; and therefore they have not power over their own will ; it is better for such persons to marry than not. Although, then, it be good for a man not to touch a woman, i. e. not to marry ; yet as our Lord observed to his disciples, “ All men cannot receive that saying, but those only to whom it is given.” Therefore, if thou marry, thou hast not sinned, “ for marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled.”---But, whilst you remain single or unmarried, be careful to avoid, and “ abstain from all appearance of evil.”---Suffer not yourselves to be seduced, and corrupted by the ungodly example of any other youth, however numerous they may be, and though generally followed : let them not allure and persuade you, to walk with them in the broad road to destruction ; for the scripture saith, “ Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil.” Therefore, flee fornication, and every other species of youthful lust.---Let your words and actions, at all times, and in all places, be decent, comely, and pure : for, if otherwise, you will treasure up to yourselves wrath against a future day of wrath, when God will assuredly visit you for your past iniquities and follies. For “ the eyes of the LORD are in every

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every place beholding the evil and the good.”— You can hide nothing from God : for to him the darknes and the light are both alike, and the night shineth as the day. Therefore do nothing in secret, which would make you ashamed, and which you would not avow before the face of men and angels : for that God who cannot lye, and who is also omniscient, and omnipresent, and omnipotent ; hath declared and testified, that he will discover, make manifest, and cause to be published, before the whole world, the hidden works of darknes : For God will bring *every work into judgment*, with *every secret thing*, whether it be good or whether it be evil.—Many nations, and families, and individuals also, as the scripture fully testifies ; have been, and are, chastened of God, and punished for their sins ; and sometimes months, and years, after those sins have been committed ; because they have not been duly humbled for them, and heartily repented of them.—Though God be long-suffering, and slow to anger, for he delighteth in mercy ; yet the *impenitent* will find at last, that God hath neither forgotten, nor forgiven their iniquities : but the truly humble and repenting sinner shall find mercy.—“ Thou makest me, saith Job, to possess the iniquities of my youth.” See also Psalm xxv. 7.

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I BESEECH, and exhort you therefore; chiefly, and, in the first place, to seek the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and then, all temporal supports and comforts, which are necessary for your true honor, peace, and happiness, shall be added unto you.—If you wait on the LORD, and call upon his name, and heartily desire to be led, and guided by his word and Spirit; his most wise and wonderful providence, will undoubtedly make your way clear and plain: and then, in due time, he will grant you your heart's desire; he will grant it, not with a curse, as he did to the murmuring Israelites of old; but with his divine favor and blessing: for it is written, “Delight thyself in the LORD, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.” Know therefore assuredly, that no creatures, nor ordinances, are, nor can be, any further a real good, or profitable to us; than what God, by his blessing, is pleased to make them.—And may that God, who is supremely wise and gracious, both direct you by his word, and enable you by his Spirit, to regard his high authority, follow his unerring counsel, and walk in his holy fear; so shall you prosper in all things.—Wherefore, let it be your constant endeavor to glorify God, through Jesus Christ, both in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. To him be glory for ever. Amen

THE END.